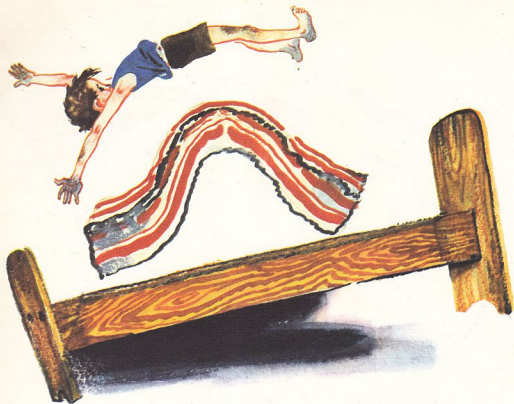


KORNEI CHUKOVSKY

WASH 'EM CLEAN







From my bed
The blanket fled,
And the sheet refused to stay,
And the pillow,
Like a billow, ^{*}
Gathered up and flew away.

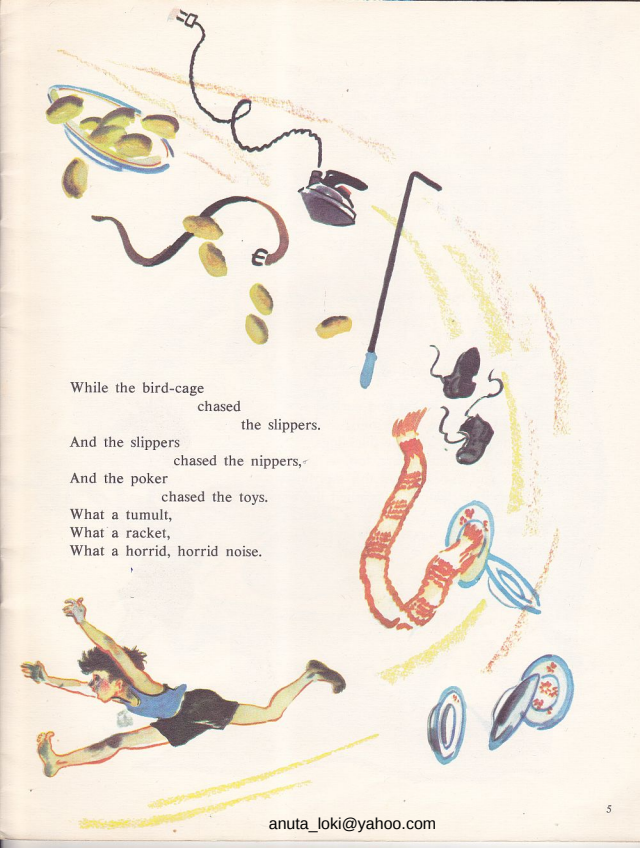
I got up to reach the light,
But it also took to flight.
I decided I would look
At my coloured picture-book —
In a twinkling it had fled,
Hiding underneath the bed.

When I thought I'd have some tea,
Cups and saucers ran from me.
Teaspoons, teapot, cream and eggs
Ran as though they all had legs!



What has happened?
What's the matter?
What's the reason
For this rout?
What a tumult,
What a clatter!
Has the world turned inside out?

Mother's irons
chased
the dippers,



While the bird-cage
chased
the slippers.

And the slippers
chased the nippers,

And the poker
chased the toys.

What a tumult,
What a racket,
What a horrid, horrid noise.

Suddenly from Mummy's bedroom,
Crooked-legged, old and lame,
Straight towards me came the
wash-stand,
And he scolded as he came:

"Oh, you nasty little slacker!
Oh, you naughty little squirt!
There's no chimney-sweep who's
blackier,
There's no pig as fond of dirt!
Take a look into the mirror.
See the ink spots on your nose?
And your neck, your dirty fingers,
Never wash them, I suppose?
So no wonder even socks
Couldn't stand a sight so shocking.

Every morning, bright and early,
All the little mice go washing,
And the kittens, and the ducklings,
And the ants and spiders, too.
All but you have washed this morning,
Cleaned their teeth and brushed their
hair.

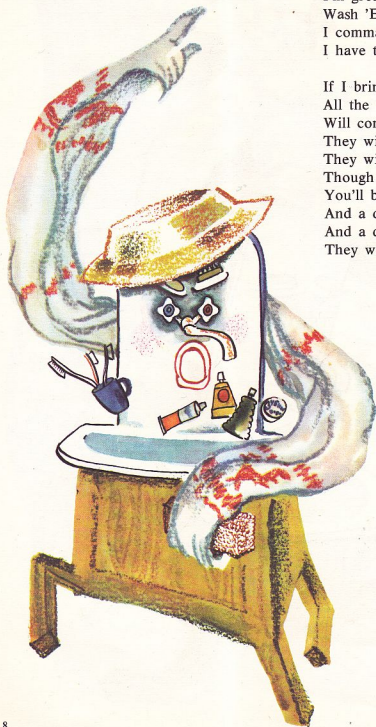
You're the only dirty devil,
So you've nothing left to wear!





I'm great and famous wash-stand,
Wash 'Em Clean that is my name.
I command the other wash-stands,
I have troops of sponges tame!

If I bring my foot down hard,
All the soldiers I command
Will come rushing bang and boom!
They will start to snort and howl,
They will stamp their feet and growl.
Though it won't be quite a whipping,
You'll be scrubbed until you gleam,
And a dipping,
And a dipping,
They will give you in the stream!"







And at once a swarm of brushes
Chirped and darted round like
thrushes,

"We will wash this little blighter
Whiter, whiter, whiter, whiter!
We will scrub this naughty mite
White, white, white, white!"



To escape the raging sponge,
In the ocean I could plunge
For it wouldn't let me be,
Everywhere it followed me.



I rushed out into the square,
Jumped across a railing there,
But it followed like a hound,
Biting me at every bound.

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Suddenly around a turning
I saw Uncle Crocodile,
With his twins he was returning
From a walk in family style.
And that sponge which dared to follow,
Like a bit of fluff he swallowed.

Then he turned and glared at me,
Then he stamped and flared at me.

"This is simply a disgrace,"

he exclaimed.

"Go and quickly wash your face,"

he exclaimed.

"If you don't, I'll beat you up,"

he exclaimed.

"If you don't, I'll eat you up!"

he exclaimed.



I ran homeward like a streak of
lightning then,
Till in front of Wash 'Em Clean
I stood again.

Soap and water,
Soap and water,
I applied with all my might.
Washed the dirt off,
Washed the ink off,
Till my face was gleaming white.





Back my clothes came in a band,
Jumping straight into my hand.

And a pie stood up on end,
Saying: "You can eat me, friend."

Then an orange from the south
Landed straight into my mouth.

There's my picture-book returning,
All my toys, both small and big,
There's my book of sums and textbook
Joining in a merry jig!



Then the great and famous
wash-stand,
Wash 'Em Clean, that is his name,
Who commands all other wash-stands,
Who has troops of sponges tame,
Ran towards me dancing, prancing,
Kissing me, he said and smiled:

"That's a darling! Now you're
splendid,
Now that all your ways have mended,
All your nasty habits ended,
Now you look a decent child!"

* * *

Every morning, every evening,
We must play the washing game,
And to those,
Who're always dirty —
Lasting shame!
Lasting shame!

Hurray for soap and sponges!
Hurray for towels and lots of foam!
Hurray for tooth-paste, white and tasty!
Hurray for my own brush and comb!

Let us all wash every day,
Let us splash in water and play

In bath-tubs, in wash-tubs, in basins
and bowls,
In oceans, in rivers, with boats and
with balls.

Washing is healthy for young and for
old,
So hurray for water, whether steaming
or cold!



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